1: Burrows--28 (1847-48) Woleaians
116, 324, 333 Ifalik

"The beach sandstone (pérou) found in ledges on the reef between high and low water mark is known to be harder and stronger than coral. But the people have few uses for it. The corner posts of a single building, the men's house, are of perou. Slabs long enough for this use are hard to find, still harder to haul into place. Their only advantage over wooden posts is that they do not rot inthe ground. Four slabs, apparently once corner posts, are all that is left of the men's house that once stood just inland from the present site. The stone posts of the men's house, which itself symbolizes the authority of the chiefs, are symbols of strength and permanence. This is brought out in the name of one of the men's religious dances, sûr perou (stone house post). The idea seems to be that everything rests on that firm base.

Slabs of perou, which has a smoother, straighter surface than coral, are used for the top course of the walls that surround the stone piers. An occasional one is seen as a backrest (mageru) on a house platform."

"Dann, in his account based on Sarfert's notes, attributes the introduction of men's houses on Ifalik to Fagil, a man from Yap. Fagil is said to have been shipwrecked on Ifalik during the regime of Dibodan or Dibodäu (recorded by me as Tipateu). On the list of chiefs he is only four earlier than Daoreligar, who was in power when Sarfert visited Ifalik in 1909. This would make men's houses a fairly recent innovation.

No story of Fagil was told to us in 1947-48. But recent introduction of men's houses is contradicted by several points in the legends we collected. The house Ilamai or Iramai, which Damm gives as the dwelling built by Modj (recorded by me as Maur), was described to us as the men's house on Falālap in Maur's time. Though there is no longer a men's house on that island, the site of Iramai is still pointed out. Maur is also said to have made use of the men's house Katelū on Falārik. The site of the ancient Katelū was just inland from the present men's house, also called by that name. A general point that seems to corroborate the ascription of antiquity to men's houses is the fact that they are characteristic of the culture of the western Carolines as a whole. Their absence on Ifalik would be anomalous.

If only the type of construction peculiar to men's houses, with middle posts and stone corner posts, were attributed to Fagil, the discrepancy would disappear. [49]

Damm's story adds that the men's houses built by Fagil were on stone piers projecting into the lagoon. Such stone piers still exist on Ifalik. The men's house is not built on

one of them, nor was it in Sarfert's day. He was told that a house on one of the piers had been destroyed in the typhoon of 1907. Rather flimsy houses stood on piers on Falārik and Falālap when we arrived. One was destroyed and the other partly so in the hardest blow during our stay. The two piers in Rauau district had no houses in 1947-48, but were said to have had them at some previous time."